

# **IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

## **LEARNING COMMUNITIES**



### **COORDINATOR RESOURCE MANUAL**

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# Welcome to Learning Communities!

We are happy to welcome you as a new Learning Communities coordinator. You have an opportunity to contribute to the success of our students, as well as build connections with other coordinators, faculty and staff. We encourage professional development through participation in our coordinator workshops, various LC conferences, and the annual Learning Community Institute.

Please explore the **Learning Communities website** at <http://www.lc.iastate.edu> and discover the many resources we have provided for you. Contact us if you have any questions.

We look forward to working with you and hope that you enjoy your Learning Community experience.

## Contact Information

### LC Administration

*For general administrative questions, please contact:*

**Jen Leptien**

Interim Director, Learning Communities  
3015 Morrill Hall  
294-1948  
[jenl@iastate.edu](mailto:jenl@iastate.edu)

### Assessment Support

*For questions regarding assessment, please contact:*

**LC Office**

### English Liaison

*For English link questions, please contact:*

**Jenny Aune**

310 Carver Hall  
294-3606  
[jeaune@iastate.edu](mailto:jeaune@iastate.edu)

### Residence Liaison

*For Residential questions, please contact:*

**Kurt Earnest**

1213 Friley Hall  
294-6264  
[kearnest@iastate.edu](mailto:kearnest@iastate.edu)

### Office of the Registrar

*For retention or other LC-related data, please contact:*

**Jonathan Compton**

214 Enrollment Services  
294-4168  
[jcompton@iastate.edu](mailto:jcompton@iastate.edu)

*For questions about course registration or course grids, please contact:*

**Office of the Registrar**

10 Enrollment Services  
294-2852  
[reg-lc@iastate.edu](mailto:reg-lc@iastate.edu)

**Peer Mentor Support**

*For questions about working with peer mentors, please contact:*

**Jennifer Leptien**

3015 Morrill Hall

294-1948

[jenl@iastate.edu](mailto:jenl@iastate.edu)

**Service-Learning Projects**

*For questions about service-learning opportunities, please contact:*

**Ashley Dorris**

Memorial Union

294-4354

[adorris@iastate.edu](mailto:adorris@iastate.edu)

**Supplemental Instruction**

*For questions about supplemental instruction, please contact:*

**Academic Success Center**

1060 Hixson

294-6624

[success@iastate.edu](mailto:success@iastate.edu)

**Blackboard Learn Support**

*For questions about Blackboard, please contact:*

[Blackboard Learn Instructor/Designer Support](#)

**Qualtrics Support**

*For questions about Qualtrics, please contact:*

[solution@iastate.edu](mailto:solution@iastate.edu)



# **Iowa State University Learning Communities Vision**

## ***Vision***

To support Iowa State University's commitment to student learning, the Learning Community initiative seeks to enhance our undergraduates' experience by providing all interested students dynamic, focused communities in which students, staff, and faculty can learn and grow together.

## ***Intended Outcomes***

To reach the intended outcomes of the learning communities the University must monitor its progress and continually improve the learning communities. The following intended outcomes provide a framework for continuous assessment and improvement. Individual learning communities will develop relevant intended outcomes that are consistent with the following University learning community outcomes.

Students in learning communities will:

- develop a sense of belonging in the university community
- experience higher academic achievement
- increase curricular and co-curricular collaborative interactions with other students, faculty and staff
- more readily achieve the articulated learning outcomes specified by departments or programs
- demonstrate increased awareness of departmental, college, and University resources
- demonstrate improved critical thinking and collaborative problem solving skills
- demonstrate improved knowledge and skills related to career opportunities
- demonstrate a better understanding of differences and similarities among people
- experience a higher level of satisfaction with the University experience
- show a greater rate of persistence as a result of all of the above.

Faculty and staff in learning communities will experience:

- increased collaborations with students, faculty and staff
- increased implementation of active and collaborative teaching and learning strategies
- connections between curricular and co-curricular experiences
- increased knowledge about students and their development
- improved reflective practice
- disciplinary and interdisciplinary collegiality
- increased knowledge about university resources
- increased involvement in professional development activities
- increased connections between their learning community work and their scholarship
- increased recognition and reward.

### ***Core characteristics***

The Learning Community Advisory Committee recommends that in order to be defined as a learning community at Iowa State, each learning community should possess certain characteristics:

- clearly defined intended learning outcomes that reflect the University Learning Community intended outcomes and the academic program's intended outcomes
- clearly defined assessment and evaluation procedures that provide useful data for enhancing student learning
- integrated and connected curricular learning experiences
- co-curricular activities that extend learning beyond the classroom
- collaborative, active learning experiences for students, faculty, and staff
- effective connections between academic and student affairs programs
- clearly identified program administration and faculty/staff support structure

# Learning Communities Calendar of Events

## June

- Annual Reports due

## July

- Work on assessment plans for fall semester
- File I-9 form prior to peer mentor start date

## August

- Update LC web directory information for fall as needed
- Check Work-Study option for peer mentors
- Peer mentor training the Monday and Tuesday before classes begin

## September

- Submit spring course request form to Office of the Registrar
- Fall budget transfer made after enrollment counts are confirmed

## October

- RFP forms are released
- Perform peer mentor survey week 6
- Give student evaluations feedback to peer mentors

## November

- Begin work on RFP form
- Submit peer mentor award nominations

## December

- Submit current fall spending summary and spring funding transfer needs
- Submit English link request form to the English LC Liaison

## January

- Submit fall course request form to Office of the Registrar
- Review LC web information for updates
- Publicize mentor position openings for next fall
- Attend Mid-year Institute
- RFP due in late January

## February

- Spring budget transfers made
- Begin interviewing/hiring process for next year's mentors
- Central administration indicates funding of next year's RFPs
- Develop end-of-year planning retreat

## March

- Register for the LC Institute
- Central administration sends return of funds memo
- File I-9 form for new mentor hires
- Hire mentors for next year
- Submit fall mentor information to LC central office

## April

- Attend peer mentor award ceremony
- Return end of year money
- Annual report memos sent out
- Invitations for August mentor training sent out
- Provide initial training for new mentor hires

## May

- Attend the Learning Communities Institute
- Submit promotional materials for Freshmen Orientation to 3024 Morrill

# RFP Budget Timeline

Refer budget questions to Jen Leptien

## Budget procedures

1. **Mid-September** – LC office will transfer fall allocations after enrollment counts have been confirmed by Registrar
2. **Early October** - RFP forms sent out
3. **Early December** – Return LC office form of fall spending summary and spring funding needs. Based on your current account balances, indicate only additional funds needed for the remainder of the year.
4. **Late January – Early February**– LC office will transfer spring budget allocations  
Submit RFP (for following academic year)
5. **Late February** – submit return of funds report  
LC office indicates funding for next academic year RFPs
6. **March** – LC office sends end of year return of funds memo
7. **Early April** – Transfer end of year money to LC accounts.  
(Be sure mentors are up to date with time cards).
8. **Early April** – LC office sends out annual report forms
9. **Early June** – submit your annual report to LC office--include itemized list of how funds were spent.



## LC fund guidelines

LC funds are provided by the state and must be spent appropriately. When planning activities review what your **educational outcomes** are and how they will be achieved by the activity. While it is impossible to list every possible circumstance for spending LC funds, please keep in mind **the spirit of this policy is to spend the funds for the direct educational benefit of our students.**

1. Review your allocations and what you asked for in the RFP
2. How does spending relate to achieving your educational outcomes?
3. Remember the “Des Moines Register test” (can you defend a front page story?)
4. **“Front load” spending**....use it to build community **early**.
5. Don't save for end of semester or end of year celebrations-that doesn't achieve outcomes. Ask your department/college to fund those activities.
6. **Typically use the least expensive food vendor**
7. **Do not go out to restaurants.**
8. **Mentor funds are only for salaries. Don't transfer to grant account.**
9. Funds should **typically** be spent on things directly related to assessment, recruitment, faculty-student interactions, cultural activities, educational field trips, and community/team building.
10. Purely social events (i.e. bowling) should be limited and in balance with other specifically educational activities. **Events should generally take place in Ames** (i.e. cultural events at CY Stephens rather than in Des Moines).
11. The following are **some** examples of expenditures that are **NOT permitted**: **computers, furniture, t-shirts, tutoring, web upkeep, gifts/awards/prizes, organizational dues, staff salaries, and faculty buy-outs during the academic year.** If in doubt on what's appropriate please contact Jen Leptien.
12. **REVIEW ACCOUNT BALANCE MONTHLY.** Look at your balance at end of first semester and only ask for additional funds based on need. **Please don't “pad” your requests. If you run out of funds you can request more.**
13. At **spring break** determine final projects and mentor hours....return funds in May **by the time school is out.**

# **Learning Communities Documents**

## **Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The Request for Proposal is an annual process during which learning communities assess their objectives and goals, and request funds for their programs.

RFP forms are:

- Due in late January
- Available for download on the LC website <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/forms>

## **Registrar & English Linked Course Request Form**

The Office of the Registrar sends out a course request form around the time that the Learning Communities RFP goes out. In addition to the course request forms that must be filed with the Office of the Registrar, English linked course requests must be submitted to Jenny Aune.

- English link request forms are due in the Fall, before finals week
- Fall semester course request forms are to be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by the second week of classes of the Spring semester
- Spring semester course requests are due to the Office of the Registrar by mid-September of the Fall semester
- More information about this process can be found on the LC website <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/forms.html>

## **Annual Report**

The annual report form is used as an evaluative tool, in which coordinators and LC staff can review the programs objectives and goals outlined in the RFP, and assess how the learning community met this set criterion.

Annual report forms are:

- Due approximately June 1
- Distributed via email as a Word document, and made available in survey form through the LC website, approximately 1 month before their due date
- A sample of the Annual Report form can be found on the LC website <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/forms.html>

# **Office of the Registrar deadlines**

## **Getting Registered for a Course-Based Learning Community using AccessPlus Registration on the Web:**

**Follow these steps to register:**

1. Meet with your adviser and obtain your
  - 4-digit registration access number, if required by your college.
  - learning community reference number.
2. Obtain your Iowa State University Identification Card (ISUCard) from [0530 Beardshear Hall](#). You will set your password when you get your ISUCard. You'll need your password to register.
3. Locate [AccessPlus](#) on the Web.
  - Go to Iowa State University 's homepage at [www.iastate.edu/](http://www.iastate.edu/).
  - From the top of the left menu bar, choose "Students".
  - Then, from the top of the left menu bar, choose "AccessPlus".
4. When the AccessPlus screen appears, sign onto AccessPlus using your University ID number AND your password. Click "Login".
5. Click on the Student tab at the top of the page, and then select "Class Registration" from the left menu bar.
6. View "Important Announcements" and click continue.
7. On the "Term Selection" page
  - Read "Enrollment Conditions".
  - Then select your registration term.
  - And, if required by your college, enter your confidential 4-digit registration access number (RAN). Your registration access number is printed on your Registration Access Card (part of the Registration Authorization Card), and/or available from your adviser.
  - Click agree/continue.
8. A screen will appear to confirm you are approved to register. Click continue.
9. On the Add/Drop courses screen, register for your learning community by entering your 7-digit learning community reference number. (Use the reference number box in the middle of the page.) Click Add. Do this FIRST, before adding any classes to your schedule.

10. Read the message at the top of the page and view your schedule at the bottom of the screen to confirm your learning community has been added.

11. Then, add your learning community courses. You may add courses using the “Search” mechanism; by entering department, course number and section; or by entering reference number. Continue to confirm adds by checking the message box at the top of the page and your schedule at the bottom of the page.

12. Next add any additional courses, and verify adds are complete.

13. Once you’ve added/dropped courses to build your schedule, click on “Class Schedule” on the left menu bar. Review your schedule for conflicts and accuracy. Review schedule detail.

14. To exit, click on “Logout” located in the top left corner.

#### Registration Tips

- Click on “Help” in the upper right corner for assistance in using the registration system.
- Your Learning Community courses have a special reference number. Be sure you enter your Learning Community reference number first —before adding any other courses to your schedule.
- If you forget to enter the learning community reference number, simply drop all the courses on your schedule, and begin again.
- You may add additional courses once your learning community reference number has been added.

If you decide to drop your learning community reference number, you must first drop all courses associated with your learning community.

# **Learning Community Marketing**

## **Admissions marketing procedures:**

Two Learning Community mailings are sent out as part of Admissions yield letter flow.

The mailings are sent out on a continuous basis.

The first mailing is directed toward parents of the student

- Includes the learning community brochure and cover letter
- This is the second letter of the admissions yield letter flow
- Sent out approx. 4 weeks after student has been offered admission

Within the offer letter and acceptance packet

- Students are encouraged to go online to accept admission and submit a housing contract
- The housing contract options page discusses residential learning communities
- University housing contracts ask students to indicate LC preferences

Around 1<sup>st</sup> week of July, Admissions begins admitting for summer and fall of next academic year.



## **Other ways learning communities are marketed:**

Admissions daily enrollment PowerPoint presentations

Experience Iowa State (EIS)

- Mentioned during enrollment PowerPoint presentations
- Slide show
- Display booth

Admissions website

- Learning Communities link from the index bar on main page
- International Students page under Academics
- Campus Visits page

Admissions introductory brochure

- Distributed to high school students on prospective student database in spring of their junior year
- Handed out at college fairs and high school visits

LC brochure

- Tri-fold templates are available through central office for individualized marketing

LC posters

- Available through central LC office

Orientation

- Freshmen
- Transfer students

Transfer Students Campus Visits

- Mentioned in enrollment PowerPoint presentations on transfer visit days

College Meetings

- Learning communities discussed during Orientation

There are also direct links to the LC website from the DOR online housing contract.

# **Suggestions for your Learning Community**

## **STUDENT AFFAIRS COLLABORATION**

Dean of Students office (presentations, tours to orientation courses)

- Supplemental Instruction (more connections)
- Academic Success Center (time management, Psych 131)
- Disability Resources (accommodations, resources)
- Judicial Affairs (academic dishonesty, ethics)
- Women's Center (gender issues, conference room)
- Multicultural Student Affairs (diversity issues & ideas, multicultural awareness/events)
- Recreation Services (leadership, skill/activity-related programs)
- Student Counseling Services (general counseling, stress management)

Department of Residence

- Residence hall presentations (roommate conflict, etc), meeting rooms scheduling, providing assistance at Learning Communities events in residence halls
- Maintain contact with residence hall staff through peer mentors and learning community coordinators
- Promote multicultural, cross-cultural, LGBTQA awareness

Enrollment Services/Admissions

- Facilitate common readings
- Office of Admissions participation in LC activities

Financial Aid

- Facilitate budget and financial planning workshops through ISU financial counseling office

Registrar

- Retention studies
- LC success assessment

Memorial Union

- Utilize for fall first-year student retreats
- Social activities (bowling, pool)
- Workspace, Browsing Library

Student Health Center

- Presentations on health and fitness awareness (eating disorders, alcohol, substance abuse, healthy transitions to college)
- Fitness coaches for interested LCs

Career Services

- Self-assessment resources (personality tests)
- Resume workshops
- Workforce issues discussions
- Career presentations

International Student and Scholars

- Help international students get involved with LCs
- Communication classes
- Develop an international learning community

- Study abroad opportunities (global awareness)

### **SERVICE LEARNING**

Implement and increase service learning projects  
 Collaborate with other LCs on service learning projects  
 Consider going outside the university for projects (Volunteer Center of Story County, Food at First, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)

### **BLACKBOARD USE & TRAINING**

Orient students to Blackboard features early  
 More connection, utilization of Blackboard by learning communities  
 Blackboard calendar of events

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Facilitate field trips to industries and local companies  
 Plan field trips for retreat purposes  
 “Treasure hunt” for incoming LC students  
 Facilitate field trips for team building purposes  
 Facilitate on-campus field trips for students to learn about the university

### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

Promote faculty/student interactions by having food or other social events  
 Utilize the Human Sciences College Tearoom for lunches, tea with faculty  
 Utilize Dining Services or other catering services for lunches, dinners with faculty, peer mentors, and students  
 Invite other LCs to participate in social events

### **TRANSFER STUDENTS LC**

Collaborate with community colleges to build LCs for students transferring to ISU  
 Build transfer learning communities within ISU colleges  
 Provide starter kits (freebies), connect LC with transfer student courses, mentoring by former transfer students

### **BROADEN LC MODEL BEYOND CURRICULUM**

Use FIG (First-Year Interest Group) model  
 Incorporate visual arts (photography) piece into linked English courses  
 Look for cross-disciplinary opportunities with different concepts from LCs  
 Incorporate alumni mentors into programs instead of just peer mentors  
 Merge diversity awareness with academic and service learning





## **PEER MENTORS**

Have peer mentors conduct interviews with LC students to learn about them

Use peer mentors as teachers of their peers

Have peer mentors help communicate with specific service learning projects across LCs

Ongoing peer mentor training/support across learning communities

## **COURSE LINKS**

Continue strong English link

Look for more interdisciplinary connections

## **COLLABORATION WITHIN LCs**

Communicate with other coordinators about LC events

Collaborate on service learning projects, social activities

Share assessment ideas

Work on increasing student/faculty interactions

Include faculty outcomes



# Service Learning Information

## The Four Stages of Service Learning

### Preparation

Team members must:

- Identify a need
- Draw upon previously acquired skills and knowledge
- Acquire new information through a variety of means and methods
- Analyze the underlying problem
- Collaborate with community partners
- Develop a plan that encourages responsibility
- Recognize the integration of service and learning
- Become ready to provide meaningful service
- Define realistic parameters for implementation

### Action

Through, direct service, indirect service, research, or advocacy, teams must take action that:

- Has value, purpose and meaning
- Uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge
- Offers unique learning experiences
- Has real consequences
- Offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed

### Reflection

During systematic reflection, the team members with the peer mentor will keep a journal and discuss:

- Describe what happened
- Examine the difference it made
- Discuss thoughts and feelings
- Place experience in a larger context
- Consider project improvements
- Generate ideas
- Identify questions
- Receive feedback

### Demonstration

Students demonstrate skills, insights, and outcomes to an outside group. Methods might include:

- Reporting to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members
- Writing articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern
- Creating a publication or web site that helps others to learn from the students' experiences
- Making presentations and performances
- Creating visual art forms, such as materials

Adapted from The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action by

## Service-Learning Resources

*CELT Website* <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/>

- Service-learning link <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching-resources/course-planning/specific-approaches/service-learning/basics/>

*Campus Compact* <http://compact.org/>

- In Resources section, syllabi from a variety of disciplines
- Reflection ideas

*National Service Learning Clearinghouse* <http://www.servicelearning.org/>

- Has a Higher Education section
- Offers a listserv
- Resources on a variety of topics- reflection, risk management, etc.

*National Service Learning Partnership* <http://www.service-learningpartnership.org>

- A lot of K-12 ideas but still might spark an idea for college students

*Interim Director of Learning Communities* [service-learning@iastate.edu](mailto:service-learning@iastate.edu)

Jen Leptien  
and

*Coordinator of Leadership & Service*

Ashley Dorris

- Can help connect with community partners, organize syllabus, help with reflection activities, speak to students about service-learning

## **Team Building Activities**

Team building activities are a great way to kickoff your learning community at the beginning of the semester or to encourage more student interaction. Here are just a few options available through ISU Recreation Services.

### **ISU Recreation Services**

<http://www.recservices.iastate.edu/>

Contact: [recservices@iastate.edu](mailto:recservices@iastate.edu)

515-294-4980

- Lied Recreation Athletic Center
- Beyer Hall
- Forker Building
- State Gym
- Maple-Willow-Larch Recreation Field
- Southeast Recreation Field
- Towers Recreation Field
- Disc Golf Course

### **Outdoor Recreation Options**

<http://www.recservices.iastate.edu/outdoors/>

Contact: [recservices@iastate.edu](mailto:recservices@iastate.edu)

515-294-8200

- Rock Climbing Wall at Lied Recreation Center
- Canoeing on Lake LaVerne
- Day Trips (hiking, canoeing)

Additional team building activities can be found on the LC website at <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html>.



## ISU Conference & Dining Facilities

<b>Building</b>	<b>Room Location</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Reservations</b>
<b><u>Union Drive Community Center</u></b>			
UDCC Multipurpose Room	136 UDCC	100-125	4-6428
Heritage Room in Union Drive Marketplace	292 UDCC	24	4-0082
Clyde's Sports Club	First floor UDCC	125	4-8330
<b><u>Conversations (Oak-Elm)</u></b>			
Private Dining Room	Enter through Dining Center	54	4-5909
<b><u>Maple-Willow-Larch Seasons Marketplace</u></b>			
Private Alcove <i>(can be divided into 2 rooms)</i>	Enter through Dining Center	85-90	4-2380
<b><u>Storms Dining Complex</u></b>			
Meeting room	K-S Commons	250 +	4-2103
<b><u>Hawthorn Market &amp; Café</u></b>			
Private Dining Room	1001-2	32	4-2962
Small conference room	1012	10	4-2107
<b><u>Memorial Union</u></b>			
Various meeting rooms			4-1437

*\* Food cannot be brought into these facilities.*

*Please contact 4-6056 to purchase advance meal tickets that can be billed to University accounts.*

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